

Child Fatality Review #08-13
Region 6
Clark County

This nine-day-old Caucasian male died from a severe infection.

Case Overview

On March 14, 2008, a hospital social worker reported to Children's Administration (CA) intake that this child passed away due to a severe infection caused by a communicable disease passed onto the baby at birth. The mother gave birth to this child and his twin sister earlier in the month. Both the mother and the infants tested positive for methamphetamine and Cannabinoids at the time of the birth of the twins. A dependency petition was filed on the surviving twin. She was in foster care for approximately two months and then placed with her father under an in-home dependency. The mother had five other children removed from her care and did not engage in services.

Referral History

On September 10, 2006, a police officer placed three siblings of the deceased child in protective custody. The officer reported the living conditions in the home were real bad. There were feces in the home and no running water. The 14-year-old was made to do pushups as a form of discipline and her father kicked her in the back for not doing them correctly. The children were put in protective custody and placed in foster care. This referral was investigated by Child Protective Services (CPS) and closed with an inconclusive finding. The children were returned to their parents' care days later with a service plan in place.

On September 16, 2006, the deceased child's mother contacted CA intake to request Family Reconciliation Services (FRS). This referral was screened for FRS.

On November 1, 2006, a family friend reported to CPS intake concerns for the safety of the deceased child's three older siblings. The children called from a neighbor's home and said their father held the 13-year-old down by her throat. The 14-year-old sister tried to stop their father from hitting the 13-year-old and he hit the older sister in the face. The referent was not sure if both girls were hit. The referent did not see the girls in person so was unclear if there were injuries. This referral was investigated by Child Protective Services (CPS) and closed with an inconclusive finding. The family was actively involved in services monitored by the department.

On November 7, 2006, school staff reported the older two sisters in the family were runaways. Once they returned they had to stay in the bedroom at all times. The parents put a container in the room for them to go to bathroom. They were not allowed out of their

room to eat nor could they speak to the other children. The referral was screened for low-risk CPS.

On June 4, 2007, a family friend said one of the children came to her door and did not want to go home because her mother was a methamphetamine addict and the home was filthy and rat infested. The child also reported dirty laundry was three feet high and the utilities were about to be shut off. The referral was screened for low-risk CPS.

On July 5, 2007, the 15 and 13 year-old siblings of the deceased child told a neighbor their mother kicked them out of the house. They added their mother was gone for three days and they took care of their younger siblings. This neighbor said the deceased child's mother hung out with a bad group of people and she was into drugs. The neighbor called FRS intake to see how she could help the girls. The referral was screened for low-risk CPS.

On July 10, 2007, a police officer reported the house was filthy and unfit for human habitation. There were eight dogs with both animal and human feces in every room of the house. The officer placed the five children in protective custody. Dependency petitions were filed on each child. They were out of their parents' care when their mother gave birth to twins (including the deceased child). They remain out of their parents' care. The referral were screened in for investigation by CPS and closed with founded findings.

On January 7, 2008, a relative reported the deceased child's mother was pregnant and using methamphetamine daily. The mother planned to have the baby at home to avoid detection by law enforcement and CPS. She did not receive prenatal care. This referral was screened as information only.

On March 6, 2008, a hospital social worker and a social worker with Home and Community Services reported the mother gave birth to twins (one being the deceased child). The mother received no prenatal care during her pregnancy and was not aware that she was having twins. The mother tested positive for methamphetamine prior to the birth of these twins. The mother told hospital staff she used methamphetamine to relieve stress. The hospital social worker reported the babies were stable. The mother lost custody of her five other children and did not engage in court ordered services. This referral was accepted for investigation by CPS and closed with a founded finding.

On March 14, 2008, a hospital nurse reported the death of this nine-day-old child. The child died from a severe infection caused by a communicable disease passed onto the baby at birth.

Issues and Recommendations

Issue: None

Recommendation (Comment): The death of this infant was an unfortunate result of exposure to a communicable disease carried by his mother. The department had been working with the mother prior to his birth, but she refused to engage in services. The older siblings are in care and remain in care. The office and social workers involved in this case worked very closely with the parents and had frequent and ongoing access to them. The social workers have also worked very closely with all of the children to identify their needs and provide them with the necessary services. The office worked with both fathers involved in this case and has sought out relatives to utilize for placement and support in this case. The social workers were diligent and worked hard to provide the safest environment for these children while promoting reunification plans with the parents. This case was full of excellent documentation of all of the efforts and services that have been provided to this family.